

## **SAND abstract No. 27 from the BEACH program 2001–02**

### **Subject: Prevalence and management of influenza**

**Organisation supporting this study:** Roche Products Pty Ltd.

**Issues:** This study was designed to gain a better understanding of the prevalence and management of influenza in general practice patients. Topics explored included the prevalence of influenza vaccinations; the annual incidence of influenza in general practice patients and their immediate families; the impact on their daily activities; medications used for management; from whom treatment was sought.

**Sample:** 2,784 respondents from 94 GPs; data collected between 12/06/01–16/07/01.

**Method:** Details are included in the paper entitled 'SAND Method' available on this web site <http://www.fmrc.org.au/beach.html>. Patients were provided with an information card outlining the symptoms of influenza compiled with advice from the Australian Influenza Working Party. Symptoms included sudden onset of fever, chills, body aches and pains, headache, dry cough and fatigue. This card also included an explanation of the scale of impact on daily activities used.

### **Summary of results**

The age-sex distribution of respondents was similar to the distribution for all BEACH (general practice) encounters, with the majority of patients (57.5%) being female and aged 25–44 (25.2%, 95% CI:22.8–27.6) or 45–64 (25.1%, 95% CI:22.8–27.4) years.

One third of respondents had received an influenza vaccination in the previous 12 months. The rates for males and females were equivalent. Among adults the vaccination rate increased significantly with age, from 15.1% of 25–44 year olds to 82.8% of respondents aged 75 years and over.

Less than 10 per cent of respondents reported experiencing influenza in the last 12 months. Of the influenza sufferers, half sought treatment from a GP, whilst one quarter did not seek any advice or treatment. Two thirds of those who had suffered influenza reported that it interfered moderately to greatly with their daily activities.

One quarter of respondents who had suffered influenza had not taken any medications. Of the remainder, 46% had taken one medication only. The most common medication was paracetamol (24.0%, n=71).

Forty three per cent of respondents who had experienced influenza reported another member of the family also having influenza in the previous 12 months.

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